

LINKING TRAINING TO BUSINESS GOALS THROUGH THE USE OF A
TRAINING IMPACT MAP

by

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A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree in
Training and Development

Approved for Completion of 4 Semester Credits
TRHRD-735 Field Problem in Training and Development

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December, 2001

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ABSTRACT

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| McCarthy | Melissa | J. |
| Linking Training to Business Goals Through the Use of a Training Impact Map | | |
| Training and Development | Dr. David Johnson | December/2001 33 pages |
| American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual | | |

This study examines the challenge of transitioning from a traditional training department to a performance improvement function. Research of the current literature suggests that in order for Training and Development departments to succeed in directly meeting organizations' business goals, these departments must reinvent themselves to become internal performance consultants.

This purpose of this study is to examine the benefits of using a Training Impact Map to identify the training needs of employees as well as the goals of the business units when contacted to provide a "training" solution by management at Company Q. Prior to this study, no formal training initiative existed at Company Q that linked training curriculum directly to strategic business objectives.

The Training Impact Map model, developed by Brinkerhoff and Gill, visually demonstrates how one position in a company can directly impact a business outcome.

The Training Impact Map is designed to analyze any position within a company and determine the critical performance behaviors needed to meet both business unit and company business goals.

The end result of the study is that all key stakeholders can see the impact of each position's critical performance behaviors has on the bottom line. Management better understands the benefit of taking a systems approach to identifying problems and solutions within the business units. The Training department is able to demonstrate their ability to perform as a strategic business partner with the business units, rather than a "shop" that only contained training solutions.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Company Q Overview

The field of Training and Development is continuously evolving. The traditional training department tends to be more reactive, and offers general courses for large groups. The training is offered when it suits the training department's schedule. Many times, no follow-up or evaluation of the learning or outcomes is measured.

More and more, training departments are moving to a more proactive structure, one that looks at training as only one possible solution to a problem. Training departments today need to be focused on performance improvement and human performance technology (HPT). Using a systems approach, training staff can obtain a better sense of those factors that affect performance of a system, a group, or the organization.

One of the challenges encountered by traditional training departments is making the transition to a performance improvement function. The difficulty lies in educating upper and middle management to see the training function as a strategic business partner. The training department needs to be included in planning and problem solving, rather than only providing canned "training solutions." This field project addresses the importance of linking training to strategic business goals of an organization.

Company Q is a fraternal benefit society that serves over 1.7 million members, nationwide. This fraternal benefit society offers insurance, financial, educational, and volunteer opportunities to its members. Company Q has been in business since 1902.

The Operations side of the company has a division called Member Services. This division is responsible for processing new business and maintaining existing business. To date, no formal training program has been in place for this division.

New hires are provided a brief company orientation by the Human Resources department. This orientation introduces the new employees to company benefits, history of the company, and offers some technology training. From there, the employees are sent to their new department to meet their team. The majority of training from this point is conducted on-the-job. The Technology department delivers most of the general technical training to the whole company, offering classes in applications such as Lotus notes and Microsoft Office.

In February 2000, a formal training and development department was created. This department consists of the training and development manager and the training and development specialist. One of the major challenges for this department has been to identify who is doing what training and when, throughout all of Member Services. The number of employees in Member Services totals approximately 550 people. One of the goals of this department is to be seen by management as a strategic business partner, and be included in projects up front.

Training in Member Services has rarely been designed or implemented by anyone with a background in training or instructional design. While on-the-job training has been conducted for almost 100 years, many important components are missing. On-the-job

training in Member Services consists of one trainer working with one or more new hires, while still performing the tasks of their own job.

Those in the role of “trainer” do not necessarily have the skills, the ambition, the patience, or the know-how to properly train a new employee. There is no training plan or timeline designed up front. There are no learning objectives created. Much of the focus is placed on learning the products and processes, but not the “why’s” of performing a task. Very few soft skills are shared. No assessment of written or verbal communication skills is done. No formal evaluation of the training is done at any level. No performance expectations are built into the training. Employees have no idea what type of performance is expected and by what dates. No assessments are done to determine what skill level employees are at before training or after training.

Finally, no thought or emphasis is placed on the business impacts of the training. Nothing beyond what it will cost the company, that is. This company could save a great deal of time and money if each business unit understood which five or six tasks performed in each job ultimately impacted the business goals of the unit, as well as the entire organization. The knowledge and skills needed to perform each task would be identified, along with the proper skill level needed to successfully complete each task to specific performance standards. This way, training would be focused on the main tasks that impact the bottom line.

Typically, business units meet for annual strategy planning. The training and development staff should be involved with these meetings, but are not. Over the past

year, the latest trend at Company Q has been promoting the idea of a “balanced scorecard.” Yet, very few employees understand how each job impacts the bottom line. The training impact map can help accomplish that.

Statement of the Problem

The problem at Company Q is that training has never been aligned with strategic business goals. For purposes of this study, one business unit has been chosen to use the training impact map to link training directly to the business objectives. Once this pilot test is completed and the results shared with management, this instrument will be implemented for all the business units in Member Services.

Research Objectives

In order to assess the benefits derived from strategically linking training to business goals, it is necessary to study the skills of the employees, the performance expectations of the manager, and the current training. Therefore, the research objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To determine the effectiveness of the current training system.
2. To assess the knowledge and skill levels of the employees in this business unit.
3. To measure outputs before and after the Training Impact Map is used.

Need for Study

While employees must have training to perform all job-related tasks, some tasks have a greater impact on the business goals of the unit. For instance, the business goal of

keeping member premiums at a reasonable price depends on employees' ability to identify and report fraud as it occurs.

This study can have a significant impact on future business strategies in Member Services, and possibly the whole company. Management may see the direct benefits of applying the Training Impact Map to all business units.

In addition to linking training to business goals, the Training Impact Map may serve other purposes:

1. Managers can use the Training Impact Map to tailor their interview questions, asking about specific knowledge and skills that impact their business goals, rather than using general questions.
2. Employees in each business unit can see very specifically how the tasks performed every day impact the bottom line for the company.
3. Employees can understand the expectations of performance because each job description will be mapped out with the specific levels of knowledge and skills that are needed.
4. Employees looking to change jobs or move up can access those other positions and see what type of developmental goals should be pursued.
5. Employees can determine what tasks should take priority over others.
6. Employees work together in a more productive manner because all team members understand what level of performance is expected from each other, in every position.

Company Q, as a whole, has been only partially meeting its business goals for the last five years. This is due to a variety of factors:

1. The declining rate of the fraternal population.
2. The reorganization of the sales agent structure, which resulted in agent turnover as well as time to train agents about the new structure.
3. Turnover in Member Services.
4. Unstructured on-the-job training delivered in a rushed, unorganized manner.
5. The competition in the financial and insurance industry has greatly increased due to recent changes in laws and regulations.

Research Model

Literature related to training strategies, development, and implementation of strategic plans, learning organizations and employee behavior has been read, studied, and analyzed by the researcher in order to develop the research project. The review of literature is presented in Chapter Two.

To collect primary data, the researcher used the Training Impact map instrument with a pilot group. This data was collected through verbal collaboration with the business unit manager and the employees.

Chapter Three will include diagrams demonstrating each step of the map.

Chapter Four will share the chain of progress made during the pilot, as well as the results and interpretation of the research project.

Chapter Five will reveal the conclusions and recommendations of the researcher.

Definitions of Terms

For clarity of understanding, the following terms are defined as follows:

1. Balanced Scorecard – a measurement tool that companies can use to get a picture of performance from four perspectives: financial, customer, internal business process and learning and growth (Galagan, 1997).
2. E-learning – Covers a wide set of applications and processes such as Web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration. It includes the delivery of content via Internet, intranet/extranet (LAN/WAN), audio- and videotape, satellite broadcast, interactive TV, and CD-ROM (<http://www.learningcircuits.org/glossary.html#E>)
3. Human Performance Improvement –“the systematic process of discovering and analyzing important human performance gaps, planning for future improvements in human performance, designing and developing cost effective and ethically justifiable interventions to close performance gaps, implementing the interventions, and evaluating the financial and non-financial results” (Rothwell, 1996).
4. Human Performance Technology –a set of methods and procedures, and a strategy for solving problems, for realizing opportunities related to the performance of people (www.ispi.org/services/whatshpt.htm).
5. Knowledge Management – equates to the process of creating, capturing, and leveraging organizational knowledge (www.astd.org).

6. Learning Organization – Continuous learning by the organization that promotes growth and success (www.astd.org).
7. Performance Analysis – looks at an organization's performance requirements in light of its objectives and its capabilities. It identifies the current or anticipated gaps in workforce performance or competence (www.ispi.org/services/whatshtpt.htm).
8. Training – Learning that is provided in order to improve performance on the present job (<http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/glossary.html>).

Limitations of Study

There are two primary limitations of this study. They are the subjectivity of the participants in the pilot group and the bias of the training department toward demonstrating results to help solidify becoming a strategic business partner with management.

Chapter II

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

Training departments are evolving from a reactive to a proactive approach in meeting organizations' needs. The training field now boasts a variety of new terms such as e-learning, performance analysis, human performance technology, learning organization, knowledge management, and strategic business partner, to name a few. As Company Q looks to create the ideal work world in the face of an upcoming merger, the best practices of other companies, as well as training theories and practices, become increasingly important to research.

The Role of Training Departments

Traditional training departments know how to design and develop courses. The services provided include writing objectives, creating an evaluation plan, working with subject-matter-experts (SME), and selecting appropriate delivery methods. Unfortunately, most departments don't think or even know about the critical performance outcomes for each core process and sub-process of the business. Once these critical performance requirements are identified, then the learning gaps can be discovered (Reinhart, 1997).

Many companies still have traditional training departments. By creating a training function that is ultimately responsible for the learning of the employees, management can avoid taking any responsibility. This is a mistake. No training function can hope to understand the ins and outs of daily business in each function.

By separating training from the day-to-day functions of the department, the training is almost guaranteed to be out of touch with everyone's individual jobs. It will be generic and irrelevant to the participants (Tobin, 1998).

Another consequence of separating training from daily functions is that employees see training events as the only time to go "learn" anything, instead of learning continuously. Managers tend to back away from enforcing new knowledge and skills back on the job because they are out of touch with the training function. Managers also believe that the training function is ultimately responsible for the participants' learning (Tobin, 1998).

Training departments provide new knowledge and skills, but the managers' behavior determines whether or not that new behavior happens back on the job to improve job performance. Brinkerhoff and Gill (1994) state that managers impact training by:

1. Influencing the attitude of the trainee coming to the training event.
2. Approving the time and money spent for the training.
3. Providing or not providing time to practice the new skills back on the job.
4. Providing or not providing reinforcement of the knowledge and skills.

Without a solid partnership between training departments and managers, training will continue to be inefficient, expensive, and will not meet business goals.

But management is not the only guilty party in not meeting the learning needs of the employees. The training function is also partially responsible for not meeting needs. Many training departments have professional standards that must be upheld in the design

of every program. Often, this takes weeks or even months. This type of training program fails to meet the needs of the audience. It is nowhere near “just-in-time” training (Tobin, 1998).

The trap for many training departments lies in trying to fix every problem with a training solution. Training departments should focus on doing a full needs assessment when asked to provide training. These departments should then be prepared to offer solutions that focuses on issues like performance gaps, the learning and work environments, the aptitude of the learners and the levels of motivation.

All companies are guilty of “sheep dipping” at some point or another. This is the kind of mentality that says “all employees need this program” and everyone is put through one big program (when it’s convenient to schedule, of course). This type of training has little to do with performance or specific skills needed right this minute to do a specific job task (Reinhart, 1997).

In 1995, Gill offered a new paradigm for the Human Resource Development (HRD) profession. HRD should link training to the strategic business goals of the company. Gill suggested four principles to guide the new roles in the profession:

1. Link all training events and outcomes to business needs and strategic goals.
2. Maintain a strong customer focus in all training.
3. Use a systems view to manage training.
4. Make continuous improvements to training by measuring it (Gill, 1995).

Many training managers have yet to embrace this idea. “Trainers have not yet learned to tie their training budgets and requests to corporate goals,” says ITC president Bill Walton. He is “seeing more interest among upper management in spending investment dollars on training. But all too often the trainers themselves are not involved in those meetings” (Barron, 1996, p.31).

Knowledge of the company’s business processes is crucial. The company has a set of key processes that allow the company to run. Process mapping allows every employee to understand how their job affects other departments and the bottom line of the company (Tobin, 1998).

“Knowledge development must be tailored to the needs of each employee and of each job within the company, using just-in-time learning along with just enough learning methods” (Tobin, 1998, pp. 46-47). An increasing number of companies are embracing the use of specific job aids or on the job training (OJT) to get right to the heart of needed knowledge and skills (Panzar, 2001).

Carr (1992) states that training is smart only when it’s strategic. It cannot be separated from the overall goals of the company. The training manager should make sure that the training function is operationally aligned with the company’s overall strategy. The vision of the training function should be looking ten to twenty years into the future, anticipating the training needs of the company.

Traditional training departments concentrate on development and delivery instead of analysis and design. Analysis and design is critical in improving performance and bottom

line impact. It's also critical to bridge the overall strategic mission and smart training delivery (Carr, 1992).

Carr summarizes with seven key points:

1. The training function should concentrate on performance improvement.
2. Take a strategic approach to training.
3. The focus should be on mastery, not just competencies.
4. All training should be approached systematically.
5. Trainers should choose delivery methods with care, meeting the needs of the audience, the budget, and the overall strategy.
6. Avoid technology-based training for its own sake.
7. Use "train-the-trainer" techniques, job aids, and structured on-the-job training to provide just-in-time training, as it is needed.

"New measures must be developed that link actions to strategies, monitor changes in intellectual capital, and encourage value-creating work" (Hope & Hope, 1997, p.13). The work environment is quickly becoming a workforce of specialists as the workplace becomes more designed around knowledge workers and their computer networks. Most specialists end up doing a lot of work outside of their specialty, which results in paying skilled workers to do the tasks that could be performed for less pay by someone else. This trend also shows that productivity declines (Hope & Hope, 1997).

The benefit of a hierarchical structure allows all of the material in a training program to be relevant to the achievement of one or more goals of a business plan. The superior-

subordinate relationship enables the developer to bring order and focus into the development of the training. The structure of a training program, according to Shapiro, begins with the Business Plan at the top, followed by the Training program, the training modules, the training units and the smaller units of knowledge and skill (Shapiro, 1995).

In a performance-improvement training department, the work style focuses on collaboration. This function contacts and networks with the managers, supervisors, and others whose business needs will need supporting (Robinson & Robinson, 1995).

To successfully position a training department, Noonan (1995) offers five practical tips for training managers:

1. Link training to a clear business goal or strategy.
2. Focus on behavior changes, not “education.”
3. Market the training - don’t sell it.
4. Use business terms, not training terms.
5. Evaluate the impacts of the training.

Business Impacts of Training

Zahn (2001) discusses the ongoing transition of training departments and states that the function of training is increasingly being seen by senior managers as a necessity for recruitment, selection, retention, promotion, and evaluation of quality employees.

Management recognizes the need for an environment that demands performance enhancement and expects professionalism of its trainers.

In 1994, Coopers and Lybrand, (along with the American Society of Quality Control, Rutgers University Center for Public Productivity, and the National Institute of Canada), conducted a survey of 300 “improvement-driven” organizations to understand the implications for training departments. The survey looked at the management practices in the areas of financial performance, quality, and customer satisfaction. The goal of the survey was to identify the best practices of each company in these areas: leadership, employee involvement, customer focus, change management, process improvement, innovation, and improvement measurement.

The results of the surveys demonstrated that in high-performance companies, there was a concrete link between training and organizational strategy. In these companies, the training function was considered a business partner (VanderLinde, Horney, & Koonce, 1997).

Strategic Business Goals

The old top-down approach to strategy fails to take into account the increased demand for autonomy in today’s workforce (Galagan, 1997). More people from cross-sections of organizations are getting involved in developing strategic business goals. Small groups or individuals will not be in touch with all business aspects of the company. It takes a group of diverse individuals to put together strategic business goals. John Harden of Development Dimensions International (DDI) states “there’s more willingness than there has been in many years to discuss systemic approaches and an openness to

thinking about the cultural side of implementing a strategic plan” (Galagan, 1997, p. 36).

To modernize strategic planning in organizations, Galagan offers ten suggestions:

1. Gather as many points of view as possible when creating a strategy. Involve customers and suppliers as well.
2. Keep the planning process flexible and open to change.
3. Avoid the narrow view of only operating based on a five-year plan.
4. Update the strategy when new things are learned through interfacing with the market.
5. Identify and build core competencies that will make the organization unique.
This can also serve to build the brand of the organization.
6. Try new methods for gauging customers’ behavior and analyzing the market.
7. Continue efforts to improve operational efficiency. This should not be mistaken for strategy, however.
8. Every facet of the business should be designed with the overall strategy in mind.
9. When measuring results, value qualitative analysis as well as quantitative analysis.
10. Make strategy implementation a part of everyone’s job.

Identifying the human critical success factors for meeting business goals must be tied to individuals’ performance plans. This ultimately links everyone’s job to the company’s

strategic business goals. Employees can determine which tasks performed will help to meet the organization's goals.

Another concept of strategic planning that ties to individual employees, as well as customer delight, is identifying and developing core competencies. A job analysis is one way to connect learners with their own jobs and demonstrates the link between the job and the business goals of the company (Fritz, 1987). By focusing on continuous performance improvement, companies are showing increases in their revenues and their stock prices are well above competitors (Galagan, 1997).

Organizations no longer view training as a business overhead, but as a major tool to compete effectively (Panzar, 2001). Organizations cannot help but focus on how to leverage their greatest asset—people and their knowledge. Companies are growing increasingly interested in managing knowledge and the intellectual capital it creates as the new “competitive advantage.” “Trainers and performance improvement specialists should be central players in knowledge management. Yet, they’re conspicuously absent in many formal initiatives” (Bassi, 1997, p. 25).

Knowledge management involves efforts to facilitate the sharing of knowledge as well as efforts to document individuals' knowledge. The modern training department would assist with both of these efforts.

“Business strategy in the form of strategic learning can translate into organizational change and competitive advantage. Training standards need to be part of the same kind of thinking as ‘strategic learning’” (Nilson. 1999, pp.46-47).

The field of training and development has gone through many changes in the last 50 years. As companies focus on capturing and enhancing the knowledge of its workforce, the role of the training staff has to step up to provide performance analysis and improvement, and above all, highly effective training (HET). To ultimately tie training to strategic business goals, the training function needs a tool to help map out the goals, results, tasks, knowledge and skills for each position in the company. The tool used in this field project is called an Impact Map.

Training Impact Map

The Training Impact Map was developed by Brinkerhoff and Gill (1994). This map ties each position in the company to the strategic goals of the organization. The map is a visual depiction of the skills that must be trained and why. This visual highlights the critical roles, interactions, and results needed to achieve performance improvement and meet the business goals. The map focuses on the results of learning, not the events that typically make up a “training program.” When this mapping is completed for a unit, the stakeholders develop a shared vision of what needs to be achieved and the benefits of training. The stakeholders are identified as both the employees of the unit and the managers.

The technique of impact mapping looks at the whole system rather than separate training programs. This approach demonstrates that training has an interdependent, dynamic relationship with the other business processes, and the entire organization. The

map as a tool is very flexible, allowing for changes in how big or small the scope of the project should be.

The first column on the left side of the map lists the individual performer or their job title. This is linked to knowledge and skills that impact critical performance behaviors needed from the performer to meet the key business goals of the business unit. The business unit 's goals are linked to the strategic business goals of the organization.

| Training Impact Map | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| Trainees | Knowledge and Skills | Critical Job Performance Behaviors | Key Job Results | Process Improvement Objectives | Objectives of Individual Business Unit | Strategic Goals of the Business |
| Position or title | Knowledge and skills needed to accomplish critical job performance behaviors | These behaviors are needed to perform critical tasks. These five or six tasks have been identified as those that impact the key job results. | These are results that need to be achieved through the critical processes and behaviors. | The processes that that need to be improved by __ % to meet the objectives of the business unit | The business objectives are those key initiatives needed to meet the overall strategic business goals | Strategic business goals of the business unit for that year, month, etc. |

Figure 1. The training impact map model.

Summary

Training departments are evolving to become proactive in solving business problems using a performance-based consultative approach. By using the Training Impact map as a model for looking at performance issues, training departments can establish clear links between each job, the critical performance behaviors of that job, and the impact of those behaviors on the bottom line business results.

Chapter III

Methodology and Approach

Introduction

The Training Impact map assists the training and development team in demonstrating how training impacts bottom line results by focusing on the critical skills and knowledge needed for each job position within Member Services. The rationale for this approach is as follows:

1. The Training and Development team has a training staff of two to accommodate 550 employees. Time and resources must be used wisely to make the greatest impact.
2. This tool demonstrates how the Training and Development team can be strategic business partners with management.
3. By mapping out each job, the Training and Development team can begin to identify what similar or same training is needed for different employees in Member Services, and can offer the right training to the right people at the right time.

Research Design

The Training Impact Map was completed when managers in the Underwriting business unit determined that training was needed due to a gap in performance. To maintain the anonymity of Company Q, the author has opted to describe the project in general terms.

The Training and Development staff was contacted to assess a performance gap occurring in the Underwriting department. This department had a risk assessment done earlier in the year by an outside consulting firm. Management was trying to determine how to solve a particular problem. Suspected application fraud was supposed to be recorded in a common database. If Company Q were audited by state regulators, cases that should have been recorded and were not could result in Company Q being fined or losing selling rights in some states. The task at hand was to determine what prevented the Underwriters from recording these cases correctly. It could be lack of knowledge or skills, a performance issue, or some of both.

The impact map model in Figure 2 depicts how the position of “underwriter” is linked to the strategic business goal of the unit. The goal of the unit listed is only one of several for the year 2001. The objective listed is that which directly ties to the performance gap being assessed.

| Training Impact Map | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| Trainees | Knowledge and Skills | Critical Job Performance Behaviors | Key Job Results | Process Improvement Objectives | Objectives of Individual Business Unit | Strategic Goals of the Business |
| Underwriter | Knowledge of layout of all pertinent applications Ability to use critical thinking skills to make judgment calls on fraud cases Ability to use database correctly Knowledge of the rules for recording fraud Knowledge of the risks to Company Q for NOT recording fraud Ability to ask questions for clarity | Spend more time on reviewing application Ask questions to verify an application is suspicious | Suspected fraudulent applications are recorded in the database accurately Team fully understands objectives | Increase accuracy of recording to 100% | Ensure that life insurance application misrepresentation is identified, entered on the Special Investigation database, and reported to management and regulators. | Maintain reasonable premium rates for members. |

Figure 2. The training impact map demonstrates the link between the underwriter position and the business unit’s goals.

Data Collection

A short survey was sent to underwriters, asking for a self-assessment of knowledge, skills, and attitude toward recording fraud. The survey asked about the level of knowledge required for identifying fraud, the ability to correctly use the database to record fraud, and the understanding of the risk associated with not recording fraud.

A follow-up phone survey was also conducted to confirm the results of the written survey. Underwriters were asked directly whether or not the lack of fraud recording was due to performance or knowledge. The survey also asked the underwriters what was needed to improve the performance of the task.

Data Analysis

The survey results demonstrated that the majority of underwriters did not lack knowledge and skills in identifying and recording fraud. Instead, most underwriters stated that recording fraud was simply an easy step to miss. Follow-up phone calls to a portion of the underwriters revealed that there were no serious consequences if recording a fraud case was missed. This data demonstrated that the gap between the desired state and the actual state was clearly a performance issue, and not entirely a training issue.

To address the issue, the training and development staff consulted with the underwriting department managers. Management agreed to promote a major initiative for the remainder of the year. First, the performance expectations were communicated to all of the underwriters. In this communication, managers also shared the consequences if

underwriters failed to meet the expectation. Annual performance ratings would be impacted if underwriters demonstrated a lack of adherence.

The training and development staff created several job aids to help underwriters remember the crucial step of recording fraud. Two different types of voluntary training were offered to the underwriters as well. Underwriters were given the opportunity to attend these voluntary sessions to practice making judgment calls on cases. The second type of training offered was one-on-one coaching to use the database. All of these interventions were designed to put learning and performance responsibilities back on the learner.

Summary

By using the Training Impact Map with the underwriters, the training and development staff was able to look beyond the initial request for “training” to fix the problem. The map demonstrated to managers that, for the most part, employees had the knowledge and skills required to perform this task. The discovery that no consequences were in place for task non-performance prompted managers to communicate new expectations and consequences to the underwriters.

The use of this map as a tool also demonstrated to management that the training and development staff did more than just offer training solutions. The intervention demonstrated that looking at the problem from a systems approach fixed the whole problem, not just part of it. In the end, the use of this mapping strategy strengthened relations between underwriting management and the training staff.

Chapter IV

Findings and Analysis of Results

Introduction

The Training Impact Map provides a solid model for the training and development staff to demonstrate the connection between training, performance, and strategic business goals. The complete results of this intervention are not known at this time. The results will be measured over the course of one year. The training and development staff will be following up with the underwriting managers every three months to assess the progress of the underwriters' performance.

Findings

1. Examination of current training.

The fraud awareness training in place prior to the intervention was a presentation of information more than it was actual training. It discussed the organizational structure of the special investigation unit, the common definition of fraud, and some examples of fraud that underwriters might see in their daily work. This training did not have any hands-on activities that would teach underwriters how to make the right judgment calls in these cases, nor did it cover any performance expectations for completing the task.

A benefit of the intervention was that it assessed and redesigned the training that was in place to better meet the needs of this audience and future audiences. The components of the training that are part of compliance policy will be transferred to a computer-based module that all employees can access once a year, as required by state regulations. This

frees up the special investigation unit specialist to attend employee stand-up meetings to give updates on the outcomes of recorded fraud cases. The actual hands-on training to identify and record fraud will now become the responsibility of each area's trainer. It will become part of the curriculum for each affected job.

2. Assessing the knowledge and skill level of underwriters.

The knowledge and skills required to perform this task were identified using the Training Impact Map. Then, the knowledge and skill level of the underwriting staff was assessed. The results clearly indicated that most underwriters already possessed the knowledge and skills to identify and record application misrepresentation (fraud) in daily work.

Due to the intervention, several improvements are in place to help the underwriters perform this task. To support underwriters when making future judgment calls on cases, subject-matter experts (SME) were identified on each underwriting team. Each SME will play a consultative role in identifying and recording fraud.

For new underwriters, fraud identification and recording training will be part of the training curriculum. Managers are able to measure the performance of the underwriters on a structured timeline.

3. Measuring outputs before and after the intervention.

Prior to the intervention, the special investigation unit estimated that only to 5-9% of cases were being recorded that should have been. The effects of the intervention will be measured at three months, six months, and one year by monitoring the number of cases

recorded on a quarterly basis. At this time, no results are available. While there is no magic number to reflect what would be accurate recording, a baseline has been established with which to compare the future quarterly results.

Managers announced the performance expectation that underwriters will record all fraudulent cases as of October 1, 2001. Managers have agreed to confront underwriters whose recording numbers seem to be too high or too low as compared to the established norm. If the recording numbers fall outside of the norm, then a specialist will review all of the underwriter's cases to determine whether or not recording was necessary. If it is determined that there is a problem with the underwriter's job performance in this area, the manager will work with the employee to develop a timeline for improvement, as well as offer any training or assistance the employees feels is needed to successfully complete the task.

Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

The Training Impact Map is an exceptional tool for the training and development staff to use to demonstrate how training should be linked to business goals. The mapping method proved to be the right tool to use in the intervention with the underwriters at Company Q. This study laid a solid foundation to build a collaborative, strategic, partnering relationship between the training department and management.

This intervention will be used as an example throughout the Member Services division and perhaps company-wide, to show the value of performance analysis and interventions provided by the training department. As Company Q faces an upcoming merger with another company, the Training Impact map will be a useful tool in looking at job knowledge requirements for new positions and old positions, and will help determine new structures and functions. All stakeholders can see a visual picture of the company's goals and objectives and determine what needs to be done to meet those goals and objectives.

Conclusions

Using the Training Impact Map, employees in each business unit can see very specifically how the tasks performed every day impacts the bottom line for the company. All performance expectations will be up front for each task performed on the job. The employees will be more self-directed in learning.

By understanding the expected performance outcomes of the tasks in each business unit, the teams will function together moving toward a common goal. As a group, teams of employees can determine what tasks should take priority over others.

Company Q, as a whole, will benefit from using the Training Impact Map as a model for meeting strategic business goals. Instead of offering unstructured on-the-job training, Company Q can see the immediate impact of identifying the level of knowledge and skills required to perform each task and how it will meet company goals ultimately. The map provides a visual picture of what must be accomplished by employees and management to attain bottom-line business results. To allow the training to continue as it has in the past can now be seen as a very costly and inefficient way to teach new skills and improve existing skill levels.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends that the Training Impact Map model be used by management to identify the knowledge and skills for each position of the functional teams throughout the organization.

Research results from Chapter Four identify the importance of involving all key stakeholders in mapping out their business objectives and linking employees' skills and knowledge, and performance to those business goals.

Once the knowledge, skills, and critical performance behaviors are identified, management can confidently support highly focused training initiatives aimed at impacting their bottom line.

Managers can use the Training Impact Map to identify what types of individuals are best suited for each position because the necessary level of knowledge and skills needed to perform optimally is laid out in a visual picture. This use is helpful for developing interview questions when hiring.

Mapping out each position also allows employees to see very specifically how the tasks they perform each day impact the bottom line business results. This leads to improved team performance overall, as all the members know what is expected of them. Employees can determine what tasks should take priority over others. Employees can also see what knowledge and skills are required to move into different positions within the organization.

The Training Impact Map can be used to visually work through a business problem that needs to be solved, or it can map an entire organization's business strategy for the year. The map is versatile enough for anyone to learn to use when strategically linking business goals to performance.

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